

REMARKS

Original Claims 1-13 were rejected. Claims 14-22 are new. Therefore, Claims 1-22 are now pending. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider the arguments below and withdraw the outstanding rejection.

Personal Interview

Applicant thanks Examiner Gilbert for the courteous and helpful personal interview conducted on January 25, 2007 (summarized above).

Examiner's Objection to Claim 7

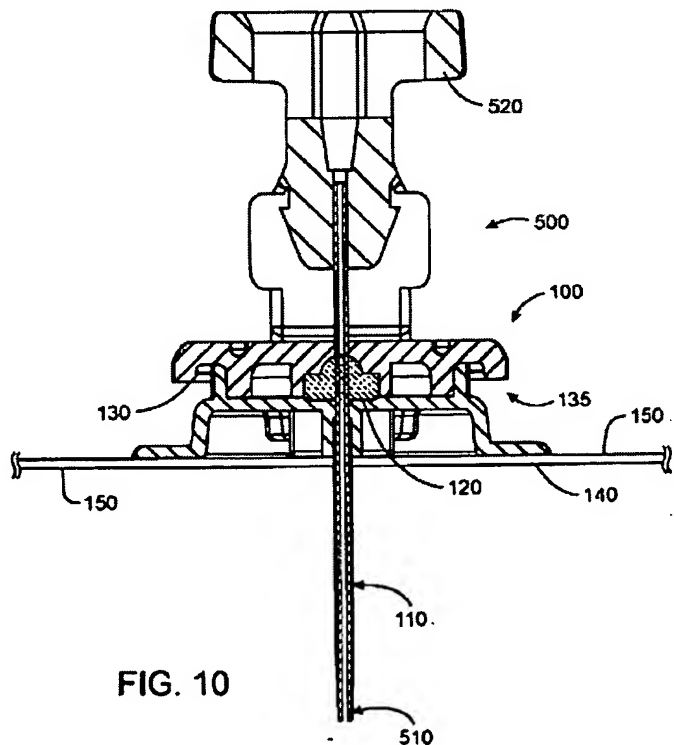
Applicant has amended Claim 7 solely to correct an informality and not to change or affect the scope of this claim. Thus, Applicant submits that all of the equivalents of the original recitations of Claim 7 are also equivalents of the present recitations of Claim 7.

Douglas ('791) Does Not Anticipate Claims 1-6

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,923,791 to Douglas. Applicant respectfully traverses the present rejection and submits that Douglas ('791) does not anticipate Claims 1-6.

Douglas ('791) discloses a housing 100 and an insertion needle assembly 500, shown in Figure 10, reproduced herein. As may be seen, Douglas ('791) does not disclose an introducer cap adapted to cover substantially all of the upper side of the base.

In contrast, pending Claim 1 recites, among other limitations, “an introducer cap adapted to . . . generally cover substantially all of the upper side of the base.” This feature can, in some cases, protect the base from contamination.



Thus, Douglas ('791) fails to teach all the limitations of Claim 1, and therefore Claim 1 is allowable. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2-6 are also patentable over Douglas ('791), not only because they depend from Claim 1, but also on their own merit.

Douglas ('674) Does Not Anticipate Claims 8-9 and 11-13

The Examiner rejected Claims 8-9 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,685,674 to Douglas et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the present rejection and submits that Douglas et al. ('674) does not anticipate Claims 8-9 and 11-13.

Douglas et al. ('674) discloses an insertion needle 30 and handle 32, shown in Figure 2, reproduced herein. As may be seen, Douglas et al. ('674) does not disclose an introducer cap adapted to cover substantially all of the upper side of the base.

In contrast, Claim 8 recites, among other limitations, "a generally dome-shaped introducer cap adapted to generally cover substantially all of . . . the upper side of the base."

Thus, Douglas et al. ('674) fails to teach all the limitations of Claim 8, and therefore Claim 8 is allowable. Applicant respectfully

submits that Claims 9 and 11-13 are also patentable over Douglas et al. ('674), not only because they depend from Claim 8, but also on their own merit.

Douglas ('791) Does Not Make Obvious Claims 7-13

Claims 7-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Douglas ('791). Applicant respectfully traverses the present rejection.

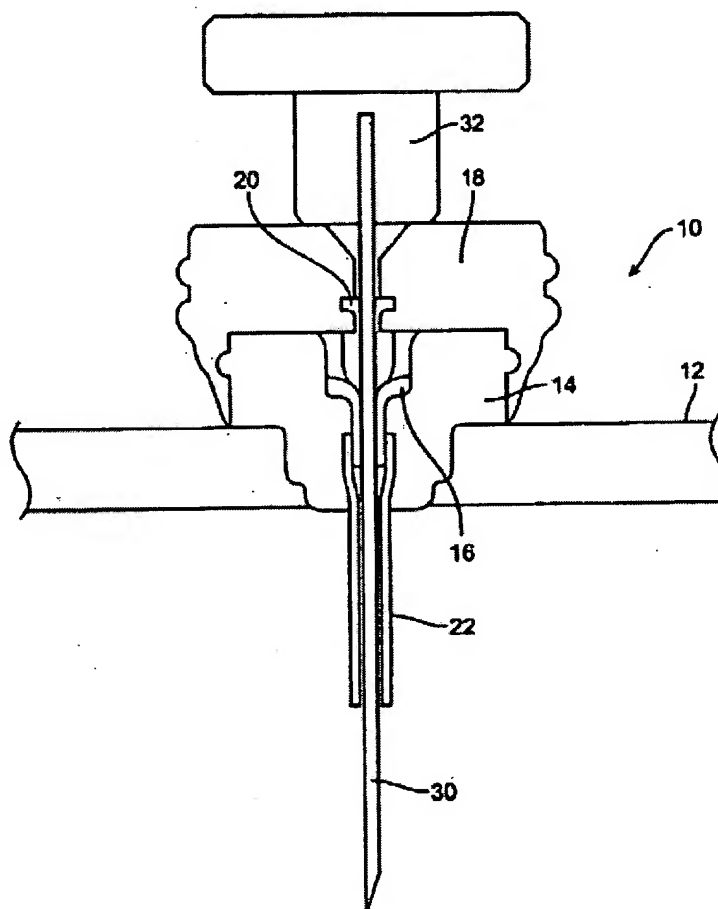


FIG. 2

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As noted above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 8 are patentable over Douglas ('791). Thus, Applicant submits that Claims 7-13 are also patentable over Douglas ('791), not only because they depend from either Claim 1 or Claim 8, but also on their own merit.

Applicant therefore submits that Claims 7-13 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that Examiner withdraw the rejection of Claims 7-13.

New Claims 14-22

Applicant has added new Claims 14-22, which depend from either Claim 1 or Claim 8 (directly or indirectly). These claims add no new matter. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 14-22 are allowable not only because they depend from either Claim 1 or Claim 8, but also on their own merit.

Conclusion

Applicant has endeavored to address all of the Examiner's concerns as expressed in the Office Action. In light of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-22 are allowable. If any issues remain outstanding the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's counsel by telephone.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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